IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly cancel Group II, claims 33-38 without prejudice.

Claims 1-17 (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) A tool for distinguishing between bindings of different strengths between first and second microbiological entities, the tool comprising:

- first particles and second particles, at least one of which is magnetic,

- means for acting on the first and second particles to cause the first and second particles to exert a mechanical stress on bindings between the first and second microbiological entities to distinguish between the bindings of different strengths, the means for acting on the first and second particles comprising at least a magnetic field generator.

19. (Previously Presented) A tool according to claim 18 wherein both first and second particles are magnetic, and wherein a magnitude of a magnetic moment of each of the first particles is greater than a magnitude of a magnetic moment of each of the second particles.

20. (Previously Presented) The tool according to claim 18, wherein the first particles are coupled to [[a]] the first microbiological entities, and the second particles are coupled to the second microbiological entities.

21. (Previously Presented) The tool according to claim 18 wherein the microbiological entity is a bioactive molecule.

22. (Previously Presented) The tool according to claim 18, wherein the means for acting on the first and second particles includes means for exerting a fluid frictional force on the first or second particles.

23. (Previously Presented) The tool according to claim 18, further comprising an array of the first microbiological entities arranged on capture spots on a substrate.

24. (Previously Presented) The tool according to claim [[18]]23, further comprising

means for generating an excitation that forces a lateral movement of the particles with respect to the array.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 18, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first microbiological entities, and the second particles are not coupled to any microbiological entities.

27. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 18, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first microbiological entities, and the second particles are coupled to third microbiological entities, wherein the second microbiological entities include capture molecules, wherein the first microbiological entities include first target molecules, wherein the third microbiological entities include second target molecules, and wherein the first and second target molecules may bind to different parts of the capture molecules.

28. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 19, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first microbiological entities, and the second particles are not coupled to any microbiological entities.

29. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 19, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first microbiological entities, and the second particles are coupled to the second microbiological entities.

30. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 29, wherein the first microbiological entities include target molecules, and the second microbiological entities include capture molecules.

31. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 20, wherein the magnetic field generator applies to the first and second particles a magnetic field whose magnetic vector has a varying direction as a function of time.

32. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 20, wherein the first microbiological entities include target molecules, and the second microbiological entities include capture molecules.

33 - 38. (Canceled).